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There seems to be 3 distinct types of higher education organizations that operate in response to unique demands and imperatives: (1) institutionally based organizations such as those acting collectively through the American Council on Education, (2) those interested in the furtherance of separate disciplines, and cooperating through the American Council of Learned Societies, and (3) those that are individually based, each one concerned with the broad processes of education. The individually based organizations do not yet have an agency through which to bring their joint efforts together. These organizations should form a Washington based consortium or council, financed by yearly organizational and individual dues, to serve the interests of both the organizations and their individual members. In the beginning, the consortium could seek out and disseminate data from federal and state governments of relevance to higher education, assume some of the newsletter functions from member organizations, provide staff resources for those organizations that needed them, develop major research and data-gathering capacities, and convene in plenary sessions at least every 2 years. It could also develop cooperative projects, create an educational policies commission, and utilize the expertise of member groups. A list of other activities is included, with a focus on activities that would bring the organizations together for working toward major goals. (WM)

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Special Session IX
Tuesday Afternoon, March 4

A PROPOSAL FOR COOPERATION AMONG NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION*

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Rationale

The American "system" of higher education, characterized as it is by a remarkable diversity, is held together by a large number of diverse national organizations which provide voluntarily accepted norms and a means for interinstitutional coordination and communication. These organizations frequently have overlapping interests and responsibilities. As a result there exists among many of these organizations a remarkable amount of cooperation--formal and informal. Examples are especially evident among those organizations which represent various types of institutions--the American Council on Education, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, the Association of State Colleges and Universities, etc. The organizations do not amalgamate into a single organization because in some important respects they have divergent clientele and divergent interests. However, they find it possible and profitable to cooperate in an increasing number of activities in which they have shared interests and objectives.

In view of the great changes which are taking place in American higher education, it is necessary for professional organizations and societies to adopt new patterns and programs in order to remain viable and to serve effectively their several constituencies. Shifting styles within and among organizations is not a new phenomenon. The American Council on Education originally was created to reflect the views of organizations yet has come to be most responsive to the interests of individual institutions. The NEA has shifted from a professional concern for a unified profession reflective of all levels of education to one which is to a large extent preoccupied with the personal welfare and economic security needs of classroom teachers. The American Association of Universities originally was created and for several decades performed an accreditation function, yet now accreditation is performed by the regional bodies and the National Commission on Accrediting.

There appear to be at least three distinct types of organizations operating nationally in response to quite unique demands and imperatives, each operating in a somewhat different style. There are institutional based organizations such as the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, the American Association of Junior Colleges, the Association of American Colleges, and the like, which now come into focus through the American Council on Education. There are the organizations and societies which are primarily interested in the furtherance of several academic disciplines such as the American Historical Association, the American Philosophical Association, and the like. These organizations cooperate through the American Council of Learned Societies. Then, there is a third group of organizations which are individually based and which each in its own way seems

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concerned with the processes of education broadly conceived. Illustrative would be the Association for Institutional Research, the various personnel and guidance associations, the AAUP (which is concerned with an individual's role as professor rather than as a disciplinarian), the American Association for Higher Education, the various associations of deans, associate deans, and the like. At present these organizations do not have a logical device to bring their collective energies into focus or to allow concerted action on transcendent issues.

Proposed Consortium or Council

In order to assist individually based organizations to act in common when such action is appropriate and desirable, it is recommended that a consortium or council of these organizations be created which would bring them together in such a way as to achieve several major purposes.

1. The consortium or council could represent individuals and organizations before the United States Congress and other governmental agencies and could affect public policy and legislative developments in ways consonant with the interests and concerns of this group of organizations representing individual professions. Frequently only institutional points of view are reflected in legislative discussions.

2. The consortium or council could build a network of contacts to obtain quickly precise and detailed information about governmental policies and legislative developments concerning higher education both federally and in the fifty states. Individuals frequently have need for up-to-date information yet existing communications channels are not adequate and individuals frequently must await irregular reporting in the public press before discovering crucial intelligence.

3. The consortium or council could provide a forum or could serve as a forum by which individuals could speak with some visability about the problems of higher education. Too frequently the most visible forms feature heads of institutions whose voices must be modified by the fact that they do personify the institutions they represent. Individuals speaking as individuals from a national platform could in many respects be freer and certainly would reflect different stances.

4. The consortium or council could provide a flow of information about the various processes of higher education contributed by the several constituencies in a comprehensive way which is not now possible.

5. The consortium or council could provide (either through its own deliberations or through a specially designated agency) broad policy statements about the future course of higher education which would adequately and accurately reflect the thinking of individuals and their organizations.

6. The consortium or council, through its professional staff, could be and should be sensitive to such things as legislative and political outrages and should serve as a vehicle by which individuals could react quickly and with high potency.

7. The consortium or council, through large memberships made possible by bringing together a number of organizations, could provide a sufficiently large critical mass so that a variety of personal benefits such as insurance programs, participation in mutual funds, and special purchasing arrangements could be provided.

Organization of Consortium or Council

The consortium or council would attempt to serve both individuals and their organizations and both would be intimately involved in the composition, governance, and financing of programs of the new organization. The consortium or council would be governed by a board of trustees consisting of the principal professional staff member and the elected head of each association. This board would be presided over by a president, a vice president, and other appropriate officers elected by individuals through a popular ballot.

It would be financed in at least three different ways.

1. Each organization would pay yearly dues, prorated according to size of membership;

2. Each individual would pay individual dues which would normally be a percentage increase over now existing organizational dues;

3. It would seek outside financial support for specific projects as they were developed in response to an expanding program of action.

The organization would maintain a Washington-based, professional staff, the size of which, of course, would be determined by the elaborateness of the program.

This new consortium or council would be expected to assume some of the functions now the responsibility of individually based organizations but in addition would develop activities and functions transcending those now available.

In the beginning, it would assume several major responsibilities.

1. It would search for and disseminate information from federal and state governments of relevance to higher education.

2. It might assume some of the newsletter functions from existing organizations but with no attempt to assume the major journal publication activities of those organizations.

3. It would provide staff resources for those organizations which needed it and might develop ways by which existing staff resources within organizations could be made more effective.

4. It should develop major research and data-gathering capacities, possibly even developing computer capacity adequate for all member organizations.

5. The consortium or council should convene itself in plenary session at least every two years and more frequently, if warranted, to serve as a forum for statements on broad higher educational policies.

6. It should develop cooperative projects involving subgroups of member organizations (such as an already planned cooperative effort involving the AAUP and AAHE in the furtherance of ideas on academic governance).

7. It should create an educational policies commission which would be expected to speak out frequently on broad policy issues.

8. It should bring the specialized resources represented in the constituent organizations together so that interested institutions could utilize their expertise.

9. It should identify and administer a growing number of programs for the individual personal needs of members.

Nothing in this proposal should be viewed as jeopardizing existing organizations. Indeed, a fundamental and underlying intent is to strengthen individually based organizations. However, individually based organizations would assume that they should surrender some program activities if the consortium or council is to be a viable entity. Each organization would be expected to (1) maintain its own structure of governance, (2) maintain its own ongoing programs, and (3) maintain its own publications unless there were perceived virtues in combination.

Implementation

This proposal should be implemented by a series of steps. Individually based organizations, through their elected and appointed officers, should discuss the feasibility of the proposal during 1968-69. There should be one or more interim meetings for sharing of views. There should be a plenary session in approximately 1970, at which time at least some of the necessary basic decisions could be made. During the discussion period (1968-69), the individually based organizations are encouraged to continue exploring bilateral and multilateral combinations of organizations.

In one sense the proposal is an evolutionary document reflecting growing rapprochement among and between organizations. Under the general leadership of officers of AAHE, preliminary searches for funding should be undertaken. If conversations during the exploratory period are productive, a combination of organizations, including the AAHE, should assume responsibility for putting the proposal into operation.